

## **Weed Battle at Island Pond**

By PAULA MAXWELL

Weed harvesting is expected to continue until next week at Island Creek Pond in preparation for the introduction of experimental plants on the pond bottom in an attempt to keep pervasive growth down in the water column.

The \$18,000 seeding program involves half funding from a state lakes and ponds grant and the rest from town

meeting appropriation, Conservation Administrator Grady said. The results will be closely watched by environmentalists as the first application of its type to control weed growth in Massachusetts. Some successful results have taken place with similar plant species in other parts of the country, he said.

"What we're hoping is that the new plants will grow in a carpet like fashion controlling

the nuisance weeds which grow in the water column," said Grady.

Weeds have virtually rendered the pond useless for fishing and recreational purposes. Previous harvesting was only a shortlived solution.

Grady said that the optimum mix for a pond is 40 percent weeds and 60 percent open

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water but currently 85 percent of Island Creek Pond is choked with weeds.

ENSR Inc., an environmental consulting firm, will complete the work attempting to subdue the fanwort, milfoil and bladderwort which has taken over the pond. The new carpetlike weed spreads like crabgrass, Grady said.

The weeds have changed the entire ecosystem of the once healthy pond. Fish are much smaller if they are there at all," Grady said.

Some areas will be seeded by machine and others will be hand planted.

Harvesting is also scheduled to be done at Lower Chandler Mill Pond off Lake Shore Drive in the next few weeks.